



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
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Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5393

2nd
July 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 14 May 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

all briefings provided for and all reports arising from, the following meetings listed in the response to my OIA-2025-5338:

An AUKUS Pillar II Engagement Meeting, held in December 2024.

A Multilateral MOU Working Group meeting held in March 2025.

The Avalon Air Show 2025

The 2025 Pacific Operational Science & Technology Conference

Post Activity Reports (PARs) generated by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) relating to the events identified in your request are at Enclosures one to three. No briefings were produced.

Where indicated: information regarding NZDF capabilities and those of our military partners is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA, to avoid prejudice to the security and defence of New Zealand and the international relations of the Government of New Zealand respectively; information provided on a basis of confidence is withheld in accordance with section 6(b)(i) of the OIA; personal information is withheld to protect privacy in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA; the free and frank expression of opinion is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA; and, signatures are withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA to avoid the malicious or inappropriate use of staff information, such as phishing, scams or unsolicited advertising.

A PAR was generated after the AUKUS Pillar II Engagement Meeting. This is withheld in full in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA for the reasons given above.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosures:

1. March 2025 Working Group Meeting PAR
2. Avalon Airshow PAR
3. POST25 PAR

HEADQUARTERS NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE
Defence Science & Technology
MINUTE

19 May 25

2025/0038

DDST

For Information:
EA TO DDST

s.6(a), s.6(b)(i) **WORKING GROUP** s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) **TEM – POST ACTIVITY REPORT**

References:

A. DST Travel Minute 14/02/2025 990965

Introduction

1. s.9(2)(a) attended the biannual s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) Working Group s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) Technical Exchange Meeting (TEM) in Chantilly, VA, USA, from 17th to 21st March 2025. This travel was requested in Ref A.

Activity

2. The main objective of this activity was to meet in person with other s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) representatives to review, report, discuss and develop plans for the next six months.

3. s.6(a)

Value

4. The s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) is the primary means of building space enterprise expertise within DST and is the only feasible pathway for DST researchers to gain real-world practical experience of space operations with FVEY considerations. The s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) meet regularly over unclassified VTC, which allows most administrative actions and unclassified technical matters to be addressed. However, the biannual s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) face-to-face meetings are critical for several reasons, including:

- a. s.6(a)
- b. To provide an appropriate venue for partners, in the same time zone, to collaborate on current progress, our plans and to afford the opportunity to identify areas of common interest and potential collaboration.
- c. To reinforce and develop working relationships and to affirm our mutual understanding of some of the technical aspects of our work. In particular, this was the first opportunity to meet Australia's lead, s.9(2)(a) of DSTG

in person. Through that meeting we have identified some useful pathways to facilitate future experimentation.

5. s.6(a), s.6(b)(i)

Cost

6. The estimated cost of this trip was \$5914.55.

Outcomes

7. The priority goals of the meeting were achieved, specifically:

- a. Agreement of the final set of experiments for s.6(a), s.6(b)(i) in which Korimako, Tui and our ground station play significant and valuable roles. Based on discussions held there is now an expectation that these will be completed prior to the next face-to-face meeting.
- b. Validation of a use-case-based approach. This should better align the outcomes of future experiments, undertaken in a research and development context, to the potential benefits in the operational context.

8. s.6(a), s.6(b)(i)

9. s.6(a)

This was a helpful revelation that should allow both nations to move past this apparent barrier to experiment progression. A potential pathway to resolve this was identified and further discussions on the feasibility of implementation will be scheduled in due course which should expose any resourcing implication for NZ and partner nations.

10. s.6(a), s.6(b)(i)
s.6(a)

11. In addition, s.6(a) expressed interest in participating in the NZ Korimako Science Campaign. Korimako adds value in two ways. Primarily it provides on-orbit functions to facilitate NZ communications research. Secondly, as a NZ payload on a US satellite, it has been, and remains, an important element in s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) experimentation. Our goal is to complete the Korimako Science Campaign and gather sufficient data to validate our modelling, gaining a better understanding of how environmental conditions can affect space to ground communication. Interest from our partners expressed here is welcome, as their participation would enrich and add value to the captured data set.

12. The level of commitment to participation was discussed. Although NZ presented a timeline for the campaign and provided the resources necessary for partner participation partners requested further detail about resource requirements and procedural aspects before making a commitment to participate. NZ agreed to provide these.

Comment and Recommendations

13. Continued development and participation in the s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) Working Group provides a significant contribution to the DST Space and Navigation Warfare programme. It maintains and develops trust and confidence with our partners and provides development, knowledge and experience to the NZDF.

14. It is recommended that: DDST

- a. **NOTE** the value of continued participation in the s.6(b)(i), s.6(a)
- b. **NOTE** the next meeting is scheduled for s.6(a), s.6(b)(i)
- c. **NOTE** that these face-to-face meetings are a critical element of effective execution of s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) , and supplement the ongoing, regular teleconferences held at lower classifications.
- d. **APPROVE** continued participation in s.6(b)(i), s.6(a) and the submission of a bid to travel to the next meeting.

DDST Comment	Signature
14a-c noted. 14d continued participation approved and travel supported in principle, subject to in-year budget prioritisation.	DDST (by email)

HEADQUARTERS NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE
Defence Science & Technology
MINUTE 027/2025

28 Mar 25

DDST through Div Chief Platform Warfare

For Information:
EA TO DDST

AVALON AIRSHOW 2025 – POST ACTIVITY REPORT

References:

A. DST Travel Minute (Te Waka ref. 3365)

Introduction

1. James Kutia attended the Avalon Airshow as an autonomous systems SME within the NZDF Delegation on the industry days of 26-27 March. Travel was requested through Te Waka and approved in Ref A.
2. The Avalon Airshow offered a unique opportunity to engage and relationship build with autonomous system vendors from throughout the Indo-Pacific region towards:
 - a. Evaluating the state-of-art in UAS and C-UAS systems to guide internal research and development road mapping.
 - b. Identifying established and emerging vendors in Australia to assess how NZ industry is positioned in comparison, in the context of potential collaboration.
 - c. Identifying products of interest from an NZDF capability perspective.
3. Embedding within the NZDF Delegation provided valuable exposure to wider organisational strategy, helping to ensure the alignment of internal programme.

Cost

4. The estimated cost of this trip was \$1745.20.

Outcomes

5. Stand visits and meetings were held with several Australian UAS payload providers, revealing a growing and agile industry leveraging recent machine learning (ML) advances.
 - a. s.9(2)(g)(i)

s.9(2)(g)(i)

b. s.9(2)(g)(i)

c. s.9(2)(g)(i)

6. C-UAS technology featured heavily at the show, emphasising the growing demand and rapid evolution in this space. Traditional radio-frequency (RF) and RADAR solutions were abundant as expected, however emerging novel, passive approaches were of interest from an R&D perspective. Noteworthy engagements are summarised as follows:

a. Anduril are an industry leader in C-UAS. s.9(2)(g)(i)

. A contract with ADF is currently held to provide air and ground protection at RAAF Base Darwin until 2027.

The Lattice operating system was also discussed. This is an AI-supplemented C4ISR solution underpinning their products and was designed around the growth of autonomous systems. Its open-architecture means third-party systems are integrated to realise the same operating efficiencies. s.6(a)

b. s.9(2)(g)(i)

c. s.9(2)(g)(i)

7. A meeting was held with Defence Innovation Partnership (DIP) to discuss industry and academia partnering from an autonomous systems perspective, noting current efforts to develop a frictionless framework, and potential pathways for NZ-AU collaboration through academic supervisors.

8. s.9(2)(g)(i)

s.9(2)(g)(i)

9. Meetings were attended in support of MOD and Navy for the UAS component of the Maritime Helicopter Replacement (MHR) programme. s.6(a)

10. s.6(b)(ii)

Comment and Recommendations

11. Summarising the UAS systems space, Australia leads NZ with a more extensive and mature industry base (even after disregarding American-headquartered primes). s.9(2)(g)(i)

12. Industry trends around the agile adoption of machine-learning s.6(a), s.9(2)(g)(i)

13. C-UAS is constantly evolving and requires close monitoring. Owing to its relative infancy, novel contributions can still be made at a research level. s.9(2)(g)(i)

14. s.9(2)(g)(i)

15. s.9(2)(g)(i)

16. Although attendance at several other presentations was planned, this was not possible with the number of scheduled meetings consuming most available time.

17. It is recommended that:

- a. **NOTE** value of industry survey and engagement at events with a heavy autonomous systems presence in the future.
- b. **NOTE** two-way value of embedding in wider NZDF Delegations.
- c. **s.6(a), s.6(b)(i)**

s.9(2)(k)

DR J R KUTIA

Research Engineer, Autonomous Systems

<p>Programme Lead Comments</p> <p>James, thanks for an excellent piece of external engagement supporting the NZDF delegation to Avalon. The conclusions drawn will inform Autonomous Systems programme planning.</p> <p>Your insights into the state of the industry are noted, especially the accelerating use of ML in uncrewed systems payloads s.6(a)</p> <p>I endorse your recommendations for monitoring industry developments, s.6(a)</p>	<p>Further Action</p> <p>Accept Recommendation</p>	<p>Signature</p> <p>s.9(2)(a)</p>
<p>Division Chief Comment</p> <p>Very useful visit, both from an engagement perspective, and for gaining insight into Australia's autonomy industry. This is useful for positioning DST's work and for how partnering efforts between DST, NZ industry and AU industry might be leveraged. s.6(a)</p> <p>. Thanks James.</p>	<p>Further Action</p> <p>Refer comments section.</p>	<p>Signature</p> <p>Clint Barnes</p> <p>Digitally signed by Clint Barnes Date: 2025.04.09 16:07:33 +12'00'</p>
<p>DDST Comment</p> <p>A worthwhile visit that highlights the importance of DST balancing travel between attending specific S&T research fora and engaging with the wider ecosystem including through embedding in delegations to industry events. On that basis DST will also make an effort to attend the Indo Pacific maritime conference in B25. Good work.</p>	<p>Further Action</p> <p>Points 17a,b noted. Point 17c endorsed subject to finance</p>	<p>Signature</p> <p>David Galligan</p> <p>Digitally signed by David Galligan Date: 2025.04.10 16:27:22 +12'00'</p>

HEADQUARTERS NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

DEFENCE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

DDST MINUTE

25/3/2025

VCDF

POST ACTIVITY REPORT: PACIFIC OPERATIONAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE (POST) & ASSOCIATED MEETINGS, 3-6 MARCH 2025

Purpose

1. Provide a post activity report including recommendations stemming from DST's attendance over 3-6 March 2025 at the Pacific Operational Science & Technology Conference (POST) in Hawaii, USA.

Background

2. The POST conference has been held annually for many years under the sponsorship of the US Indo-Pacific Command. DDST has been a regular attendee at POST, with a break during the peak pandemic period. This year both DST's Director and Division Chief for Information Warfare attended along with a research collaborator from the University of Auckland.
3. This year's conference theme was "Together we prevail." Promotional material for the conference states "This groundbreaking event promises to deliver an unparalleled platform for collaboration, innovation, and exploration of Department of Defense (DoD) opportunities for joint research, development, and experimentation".
4. The conference was held in two parts with publicly accessible sessions for the first two days and then closed sessions for the following two days. We did not attend an end-of-week demonstrations day owing to flight schedule limitations. Around 2000 people attended POST, with attendees coming from US DoD, industry and academia, FVEY countries, the Republic of Korea (RoK), Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, the Marshall Islands, and Tonga.

5. s.6(a)

6. s.9(2)(g)(i)

the acting FVEY S&T Principal from the US was present, representing a key engagement point for DST.

Highlights from the Public Days

7. Strategic competition and climate change effects continue to be major issues in the USINDOPACOM theatre.
8. s.9(2)(g)(i)

s.9(2)(g)(i)

9. There is clearly an urgency to be ready to “fight tomorrow” against an advanced threat. There is a focus on speed to capability for innovative technology solutions. Technologies emerging from Research & Development (R&D) must be deployed quickly and by a range of methods – including the use of fielded prototypes to rapidly deploy R&D. Experimentation and partnering are seen as non-negotiable elements of success. s.9(2)(g)(i)

10. Innovation activities within the nations are increasingly strategically aligned through the identification of specific operational challenges that need solving by S&T organisations. These challenges are being developed and met within nations and through international partnerships s.6(a). There is an aim to bridge the gap between innovation and practical applications that can most enhance the operational effectiveness of our warfighters. s.9(2)(g)(i)

11. An example of a specific innovative technology that came up in multiple talks was the use of large language models to parse data and documents on defence systems to provide well-informed insights to decision makers. This was seen to offer a way to deal with the sheer mass of reporting on defence systems, which is beyond human capacity to process.

12. DST’s Division Chief for Information Warfare represented on an international panel at POST. She and the Tongan Land Component Commander drew particular attention to the effects of climate change on operations and operational requirements. DST’s Division Chief gave examples of R&D work that we have underway with partners including the University of Auckland to deliver novel low-cost radar reflectors for search and rescue applications s.9(2)(g)(i)

Classified Two Day Sessions

13. s.6(a)

14. All of the US Indo Pacific Command components provided perspectives. s.9(2)(g)(i)

15. NZ and FVEY partners, Japan, and RoK provided national perspectives. s.9(2)(g)(i)

s.9(2)(g)(i)

There are a myriad of opportunities for NZ to engage in partnering and experimentation activities. These significantly outstrip DST's capacity to support, suggesting a need for careful prioritisation.


Side Meetings

16. The real benefit of POST is the networking opportunities that occur to the side of the main meetings.

17. s.6(b)(i)


18. s.6(b)(i)

s.6(b)(i)




- f. Finally, the US lead expressed a clearly genuine interest in encouraging collaboration between our nations wherever possible.

19. s.6(b)(i)




20. s.6(b)(i)



- a. We discussed a range of FVET S&T items that are coming up for decision. Such engagements are a great chance to synchronise national perspectives and plans in a more effective way than over a Teams call.

21. s.6(b)(i)



s.6(b)(i)

22 s.6(b)(i)

s.6(b)(i)

23. Visit to NZ Consulate in Honolulu. DDST met with the Consulate General to provide a brief back on POST and to highlight DST's role in the wider Defence diplomacy space, which is delivered through working on S&T matters with USINDOPACOM and partners in the region.

24. Industry discussions. Defence industry representatives ran an exhibition hall throughout the first two days of POST. This represented an additional chance to have casual discussions with vendors regarding their offerings. Identified opportunities include:

a. s.9(2)(g)(i)

b. s.9(2)(g)(i)

Immediate Opportunities

25. DST is working closely with the University of Auckland (UoA) and other partners to trial novel radar reflector devices that could support affordable and efficient search and rescue operations for the Pacific Islands. The UoA engineering lead for this effort joined the NZ team at POST. She and DST's Div Chief IW met with INDOPACOM reps at POST. s.6(b)(i)

s.6(b)(i)

26.

Recommendations

27. It is recommended that VCDF:

- a. **NOTE** the value of the POST event in terms of overall relationship building and for insights into the science drivers and approaches in the different nations, and with particular relevance to the Pacific and wider Indo Pacific region.
- b. **NOTE** the strategic urgency that is driving investment and fast pace within partner S&T and military capability organisations, and the associated speed to capability that is breaking down the artificial barriers that have sometimes existed between S&T and capability delivery.
- c. **NOTE** that multiple opportunities have emerged from POST attendance that will be followed up and that POST continues to represent a highly efficient way to meet with senior FVEY S&T leaders in one place even though US senior reps were thinner on the ground than previous years.
- d. **NOTE** that the next POST conference will be in March next year and continued representation by DST is recommended.

s.9(2)(k)

DAVID GALLIGAN

DR

Director DST

s.9(2)(a)

Enclosure:

1 s.6(b)(i)

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